

2019 Inaugural Address by Governor Jared Polis
As Prepared for Delivery
January 8, 2019

My fellow Coloradans: It is with the greatest gratitude, pride, and optimism for our future that I speak to you for the first time as Colorado's 43rd Governor.

I am honored by this great responsibility and humbled by your trust.

And I must begin by saying I am very conscious of the fact that there were many brave people over the years who made it possible for someone like me to be standing here giving a speech like this.

I am grateful and forever indebted to those who came before me — who struggled for equal rights, who stepped up for public service in all its forms, who made difficult sacrifices and worked faithfully toward a brighter future for our state, our nation, and our world.

Right now, our nation is experiencing a period of growing divisiveness and rising tribalism. But we here in Colorado have chosen a different path. Here, we have come so far, climbed so high, and done so much not just to say, but to *show* that we reject that brand of politics.

From the Governorships of Dick Lamm, Bill Owens, and Bill Ritter, who have joined us here today, we have a well-kept tradition of embracing politics built on **collaboration** and **integrity**.

Under the strong and steady leadership of my extraordinary predecessor, Governor John Hickenlooper...

We have transformed Colorado's economy into the envy of the nation.

We have plowed through the tough times and overcome them together.

When we faced devastating floods and wildfires, our communities came together, and we rebuilt what we lost, stronger, more ready for the challenges of an unknown future.

And even as the most destructive politics have taken root elsewhere, here in Colorado, we've moved forward, together.

Our mission now is to build on that legacy and make Colorado's success work for everyone in our state — from Grand Junction to Yuma, from Trinidad to Fort Collins.

We, as a people, have decided that there is no reason to let our differences divide us. No, we have embraced the idea that no two people are exactly alike, and we have decided to celebrate our differences, Colorado for *All*.

Diversity makes our state healthier and more prosperous. We complement one another, learn from each other, make each other better, and in that work, we respect each other's rights, sharing a common faith in our abilities and our future while having real conversations about how to make progress.

The greatest part of my campaign for Governor was the opportunity it gave me to meet Coloradans all over our great state — entrepreneurs, farmers, ranchers, union workers, teachers, students, parents, faith leaders, and people from all walks of life.

And what I heard from them was our iconic Colorado spirit of optimism and love for our state, but also uncertainty about their own lives.

Everywhere we went, we heard that despite our booming economy, it's getting harder and harder for families to get ahead. The rising cost of living has made it impossible for some folks to pay for quality health care, provide their kids with a good education, find a home in the communities they love, or save for retirement.

Our mission now is to make Colorado a place where *all* families have the chance to thrive: today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

When my parents came here in 1970, a few years before I was born, they were drawn by the same prospect that brought so many to this state — the opportunity to fulfill their dreams, start a family, and build something from nothing in this beautiful place.

My parents showed me what the American dream is all about. They showed me what the Colorado dream is all about. They showed me how important it is to seize opportunity, to dream big dreams and to work toward something great, not just when it is easy — but especially when it's hard.

You know, I remember when I was starting out, having the idea to launch an online, direct-from-the-grower flower company, and starting a new public charter school in Colorado to serve English language learners.

Some people told me these things couldn't be done.

If anything, the naysayers lit a fire that would lead me to success.

I had the ideas, and when I hit stumbling blocks, I brought in the smartest and hardest-working people I could find, never taking no for an answer. And guess what? Together, we found a way.

I learned that if you have a bold idea and fight for it with conviction, creativity, and optimism, then anything is possible.

And, today, I believe there is nothing that Colorodans can't get done. There is nothing wrong with Colorado, that what is right with Colorado can't fix.

This Thursday, I will detail what our administration will do to address Colorado's challenges.

But today, today I want to tell you all how our administration will approach **EVERY** challenge.

We will always view problems as solutions waiting to happen.

There will ***always***, always be seats at the table for those with constructive input. Though our perspectives may differ, we will create solutions together.

We will always value bold ideas and new approaches.

We will never, ever be outworked.

We will never be slowed by indecision or held back by fear.

We will never be stunted by a lack of imagination.

And we will pursue our goals ***always*** with joy, with optimism, and with endless faith in the people of Colorado.

As the great Irish poet Arthur O’Shaughnessy charged us in “Ode”:

“We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams...
We are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.”

And now we will get to work.

We get to work building an education system that provides every child with the education they need to unlock the bright future they deserve — beginning with high-quality early childhood education.

We get to work building a health care system that ensures families don’t have to choose between losing their homes and losing their healthcare.

We get to work building an economy where Coloradans from all backgrounds have the opportunity to pursue good-paying, fulfilling careers and pay less in taxes.

We get to work protecting our precious air, water, and land — and making sure that every Colorado family can live a great Colorado life with clean air and cheap, abundant renewable energy.

Finally, let me just say, from the bottom of my heart: thank you for this opportunity.

Thank you to the people of Colorado for placing your trust in our bold, positive vision for the future, and to all of you for coming out in the cold to join us as we begin the work of transforming that vision into reality.

Thank you, Governor Hickenlooper and Lieutenant Governor Lynne, not just for working so hard to make this transition as smooth and seamless as possible — but for leading the way to a Colorado ready for more progress and built on success.

Thank you to our new Lieutenant Governor, Dianne Primavera, one of the most fearless health care leaders and patient advocates in Colorado history. I'm so proud to work with you every day.

Thank you to our outgoing Attorney General Cynthia Coffman, Secretary of State Wayne Williams, and Treasurer Walker Stapleton. We are all grateful for your service on behalf of our state.

Thank you to my fellow statewide elected leaders who take office today: Attorney General Phil Weiser, Secretary of State Jena Griswold, and Treasurer Dave Young. I couldn't ask for better partners as we work to move this state forward. And thank you to the members of the Colorado Legislature who are here, as we prepare to deliver real results to the people of Colorado in the days, months, and years ahead.

Thank you to my parents, Susan and Stephen. They've done a lot for me — but the greatest gift of all was coming to Colorado so that Jordanna, Jorian, and I could grow up calling this incredible place our home.

And thank you to my partner, Marlon, and our two kids, who give me more inspiration and support than I could ever ask for to do this work.

Days like today are about far more than speeches and ceremonies.

They are a celebration of the peaceful transfer of power and the sacred democratic principles guaranteed by our Constitution, that sustain our republic to this day.

They enable us to come together around our shared love for Colorado and our commitment to its future.

They open the door to everything that's possible when we work together to bring about change.

So let's walk through that door together for every Colorado family that, like mine, like yours, is lucky enough to call Colorado home.

Thank you.

God bless you.

And God bless the state of Colorado.

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